OSCAR Recommender User Guide

(Version 2.0)

June 1, 2006

U.S. District Court for the District of Columbia 333 Constitution Avenue, NW. Washington, DC 20001

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1.0 Getting Started

The Online System for Clerkship Application and Review (OSCAR) is a web-based system that enables clerkship applicants to file complete applications and recommenders to file letters of recommendation online. Applicants designate the OSCAR-participating judges to whom they wish to apply. OSCAR-participating judges are able sort and screen the applications directed to them and print only what they want to read in hard copy.

The OSCAR system sends out an email invitation called an **Evite** to the recommender once the first applicant desginates that recommender and submits the application. The Evite email welcomes the recommender to OSCAR, provides the website link, and issues the username and password. Recommenders will receive **ONLY one Evite email** from OSCAR that notifies them that an applicant has requested a recommendation letter. The Evite email is only generated on the **first request** for recommendation for that recommender. Recommenders will not receive an Evite email for each additional recommendation request, even for new applicants. Additional applicants who request a recommendation from a recommender who has been added to the OSCAR system will simply be added to the recommender's **Requested Recommendations** list in OSCAR. The law schools have the ability in OSCAR to periodically send reminder emails to their recommenders who have pending recommendations.

This user manual provides guidance to recommenders on how to perform the following functions:

- Logging into the system
- Viewing requests for recommendation letters
- Uploading recommendation letters

OSCAR provides a feature for recommenders to upload letters of recommendation that have been created in another file format and/or to create letters of recommendation within OSCAR using the online editor. OSCAR also has a mail merge function in the online editor that allows the user to batch upload a letter and address it to multiple judges. Note: Once the letters are viewable by the judges, letters of recommendation cannot be edited, withdrawn, or deleted. The exceptions are student applications will not be released to the judges until noon September 6, 2006 and alumni applicants can place their applications in a Hold for Later Submission status. In both cases, their recommendations letters my be edited or deleted since the applications have not been released to the judges.

1.1 Help Desk

Call the OSCAR Help Desk at (202) 354-3005 Monday through Friday, between 8:30 am and 5:00 pm Eastern Standard Time,, for telephone assistance in using OSCAR. Questions can also be directed via email at oscar-support@dcd.uscourts.gov.

1.2 OSCAR Information Resources

After logging into the system, OSCAR displays instructions and direct online access to the OSCAR user guides, information on converting documents to .pdf format, and Help.

1.3 Hardware and Software Requirements

The following hardware and software are needed to use the OSCAR system.

- A personal computer running a standard operating system such as Microsoft Windows
- Internet access and Web browser (Internet Explorer 5.5 and above, Firefox, and Netscape 7.2 and above are recommended)
- Adobe Acrobat Reader

Note: OSCAR only allows documents to be uploaded in .pdf format. OSCAR provides an online editor for users to create their letters within OSCAR.

1.4 Basic User Interactions

Users normally interact with the OSCAR system in three ways:

- Entering information in data fields
- Using the mouse to click on hyperlinks
- Selecting command buttons to direct system activities

1.5 Button Descriptions

Apply Search	The Apply Search button allows the user to search for an applicant's name and/or email.
Back	Users click on the OSCAR Back button to go back to the previous screen. For optimal performance, use the OSCAR Back button as opposed to the web browser's Back button.
Help	The Help button provides users access to system questions and answers.
Submit	The Submit button allows the user to perform a function and exit that record. Once a letter is submitted, that letter <u>cannot</u> be edited or withdrawn if the application has already been released to the judge.

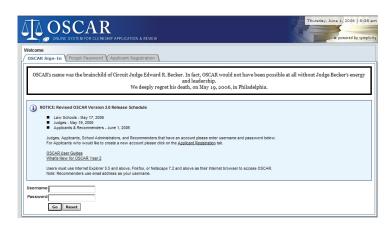
2.0 Accessing the OSCAR System

This section provides instructions for entering the OSCAR system.

- 1. From your Internet browser, type in the following address to go to the OSCAR website: https://oscar.symplicity.com
- 2. Login to system by clicking the OSCAR Sign-in tab and entering your username and password and clicking the "Go" button. (Note: Clicking "Reset" will clear your entry.)

Note: Recommenders will receive their usernames and passwords from the Evite email and may even access OSCAR from the link located within the Evite.

Figure 1. Logging into the System



2.1 Forgot Password

Users who forget their password must retrieve it through the Forgot Password tab on the OSCAR Welcome page.

- 1. Click on the Forgot Password tab.
- 2. Enter your username. OSCAR will reset your password and email it to you. NOTE: For recommenders, your username is your email address.

Note: The OSCAR Help Desk cannot retrieve forgotten passwords. Users must use the Forgot Password feature. If a user forgets his or her username, call the OSCAR Help Desk at 202-354-3005 or send an email at oscar-support@dcd.uscourts.gov.

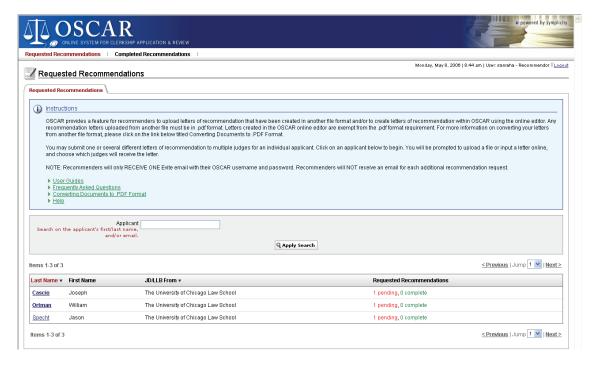
Figure 2. Forgot Password



3.0 OSCAR Home Page

Once logged in, OSCAR displays the following home page with a listing of applicants who have requested letters of recommendation. This list displays the applicant's name, law school, and the status of requested recommendations. The navigation bar located at the top of the screen gives the user the ability to select Requested Recommendations or Completed Recommendations.

Figure 3. Home Page



4.0 Recommendation Requests

This section of the user guide addresses viewing recommendation requests, uploading recommendation letters from an existing .pdf format file, and creating recommendation letters within OSCAR. Recommenders have the ability in OSCAR to upload a recommendation letter for a single judge or multiple judges.

Note: Once the letters are viewable by the judges, letters of recommendation cannot be edited, withdrawn, or deleted. The exceptions are student applications will not be released to the judges until noon September 6, 2006 and alumni applicants can place their applications in a Hold for Later Submission status. In both cases, their recommendations letters may be edited or deleted since the applications have not been released to the judges.

4.1 Viewing Recommendation Requests

Users can view the latest status of their recommendation requests from Requested Recommendations located on the top left navigation bar. On the screen, each row lists the applicant name and number of pending, completed, or withdrawn recommendation requests. The Requested Recommendations column displays the number of recommendations pending for the applicant listed in the first column in red, the number of recommendations already submitted in green, and any requested recommendations for applications that have been withdrawn in gray.

- Click on Requested Recommendations on the top left navigation bar.
- 2. Click on the applicant's last name. The **Submit Recommendations** tab appears. If there are no pending recommendations, OSCAR displays text stating "You have no pending recommendations." Click on the **Back** button or **Requested Recommendations List** to go back to the list of requests.

Figure 4. Request Recommendations

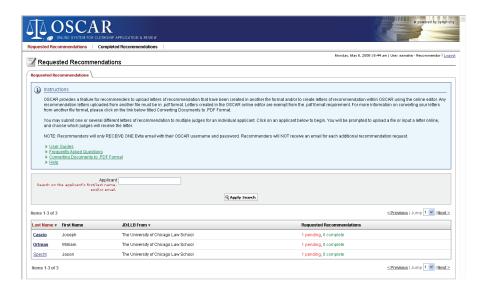
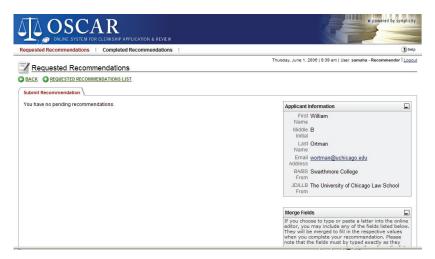


Figure 5. No Pending Recommendations



3. If there are pending recommendations, the Submit Recommendations tab will display a more in-depth screen. The screen provides a list of judges to whom the applicant is applying with a check box next to each judge's name. OSCAR allows you to submit recommendation letters in two different ways: (1) uploading an existing letter that is a .pdf document or (2) using the online editor to compose your letter within OSCAR. The screen displays the applicant's information in the Applicant Information box located on the right of the screen. The Merge Fields box displays the following information:

If you choose to type or paste a letter into the online editor, you may include any of the fields listed below. They will be merged to fill in the respective values when you complete your recommendation. Please note that the fields must be typed exactly as they appear; you may copy and paste them from the list to insure accuracy.

Note: If you choose to upload an already completed letter instead of using the online editor, this merge feature will not be available to you.

Applicant:

[Iname] – applicant last name [fname] – applicant first name [email] – applicant email address [law_school] [undergraduate_school]

Judae:

[judge_fname] - judge first name [judge_lname] - judge last name [formatted_judgename] - first name, last name, generation/suffix (eg., Jr.) [honorable_judgename] - The Honorable with judge's full name [formatted_address] - judge title, court, address, city, state, and zip code

4.2 Uploading Recommendation Letters from an Existing .pdf File

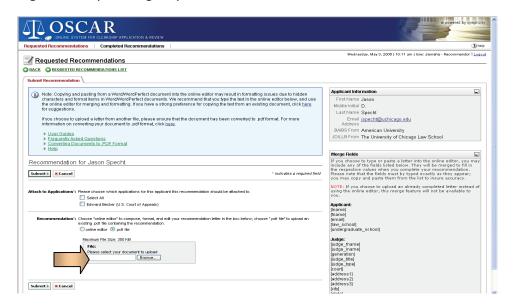
Recommenders can upload recommendation letters from an existing .pdf formatted file. OSCAR allows the recommender to upload a letter to a single judge or batch upload a letter to multiple judges. Note: The OSCAR System only accepts documents already in PDF format.

- 1. Click on **Requested Recommendations** on the left navigation bar.
- 2. Click on the applicant's last name.
- 3. Go to the **Attach to Applications** field and select the judge. Note: OSCAR allows the recommender to upload the same recommendation letter for multiple judges.
- 4. Go to the **Recommendation** field and select .pdf File.

Note: If you choose to attach a file, please understand that this identical file will be transmitted to every judge you check. If you want to send an identical "to whom it may concern" letter to every judge, this feature is perfect for that. If you want to personalize the letters at all (including each judge's name, for example), you should either submit the letters using the online editor (instructions begin on page 12) or create individualized letters for each judge (each with its own filename) and attach the appropriate individual file to each judge.

- 5. A blue window box titled **File** appears under Recommendations.
- 6. Click on the **Browse** button and select the document to be attached.
- Click Submit.

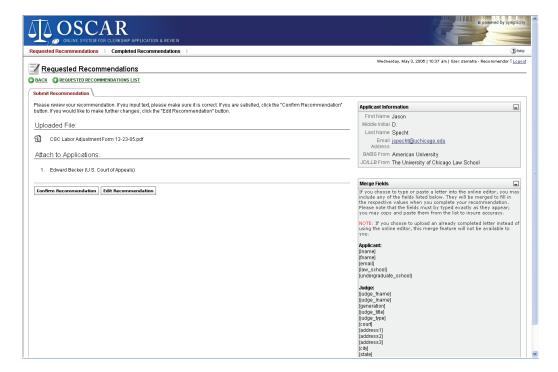
Figure 6. Uploading a .pdf File



- 8. A confirmation screen appears stating "Please review your recommendation. If you input text, please make sure it is correct. If you are satisfied, click the **Confirm Recommendation** button. If you would like to make further changes, click the **Edit Recommendation** button." The screen displays the name of the Uploaded File and name of the judge for Attach to Applications.
- 9. Click **Confirm Recommendation** to submit the recommendation letter.

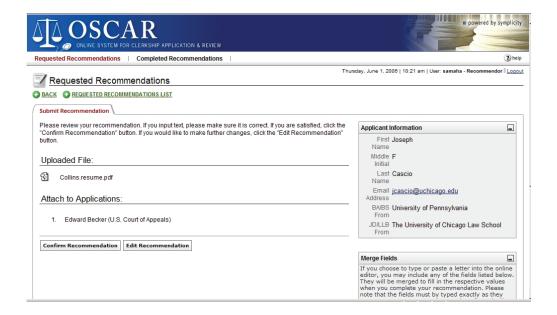
 Note: Once you click Confirm Recommendation, the letter cannot be edited, withdrawn, or deleted if the application has already been released to the judge. See page 7, section 4.0.

Figure 7. Confirm Recommendation



- 9. To edit the letter, click **Edit Recommendation**. The same screen (step 7) appears; however, a blue box titled Preview appears with the name of the document uploaded. Click on name of the document and make the change.
- 10. Click **Submit** (or **Cancel** if you do not want to submit the recommendation). Note: Once you click Submit, the letter cannot be edited, withdrawn, or deleted if the application has been released to the judge.

Figure 8. Edit Recommendation



4.3 Creating Recommendation Letters Using the Online Editor

OSCAR has an online editor feature that allows recommenders to create recommendation letters within the system. The recommender can create a letter for one judge or multiple judges. When creating a single letter for multiple judges, the recommender must use the mail merge feature. The mail merge feature is located in the Merge Fields box on the right side of the screen. OSCAR displays the following instructions for the mail merge feature:

If you choose to type or paste a letter into the online editor, you may include any of the fields listed below. They will be merged to fill in the respective values when you complete your recommendation. Please note that the fields must be typed exactly as they appear; you may copy and paste them from the list to insure accuracy.

Note: If you choose to upload an already completed letter instead of using the online editor, this merge feature will not be available to you.

Applicant:

[Iname] – applicant last name [fname] – applicant first name [email] – applicant email address [law_school] [undergraduate_school]

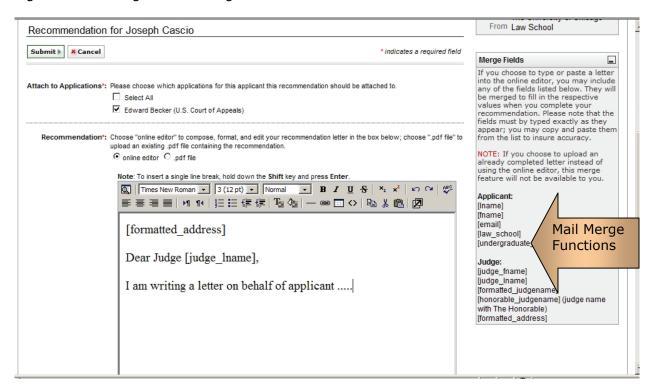
Judge:

[judge_fname] - judge first name [judge_Iname] - judge last name [formatted_judgename] - first name, last name, generation/suffix (eg., Jr.) [honorable_judgename] - The Honorable with judge's full name [formatted_address] - judge title, court, address, city, state, and zip code

Note: Copying and pasting from a Word or WordPerfect document into the online editor may result in formatting issues due to hidden characters and format items in Word or WordPerfect documents. We recommend that you type the text in the online editor below, and use the online editor for merging and formatting. However, if you choose to copy and paste, we suggest that you paste the text to Notepad first, which you can find from the Windows Start menu under Programs/Accessories. Pasting to Notepad will strip most (though not necessarily all) of the hidden characters. You can then copy and paste the text from Notepad to the online editor box, then add/edit text or make formatting changes. If you want to be sure that you have deleted all the hidden codes/characters, you can click on the <> icon in the second row of the online editor toolbar. This will make all the hidden code visible, and each piece will be surrounded by the <> symbols (e.g.,). You must work carefully to make sure you get them all, without accidentally deleting any of your work. When you finish, click on the <> icon again and you can make any formatting corrections in the online editor.

- 1. From the **Requested Recommendations List**, click on the name of the applicant.
- 2. Select the judges to receive the recommendation letters.
- Select online editor.
- 4. If there is one version of the recommendation letter that you would like to submit to multiple judges, you can use the basic "mail merge" feature of the online editor (as explained in the Merge Fields box on the bottom left of the screen) to individually address the letter to each judge by typing "Dear Judge [judge_Iname]" at the beginning of the letter. Remember to check only those boxes next to the judges you would like to receive the particular version you are composing.
- Click Submit.

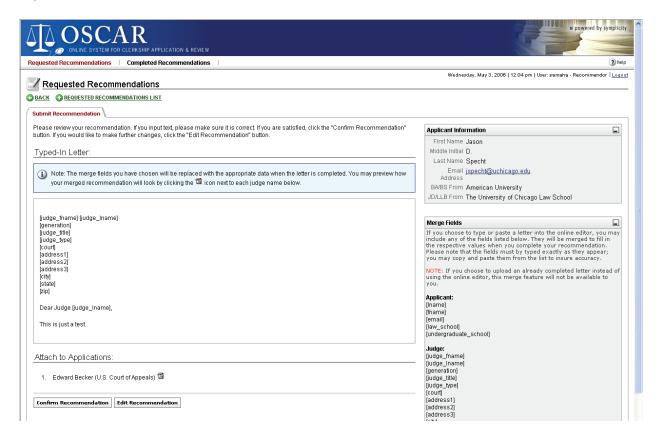
Figure 9. Creating Letters Using Online Editor



6. A confirmation screen appears informing the user to "Please review your recommendation. If you input text, please make sure it is correct. If you are satisfied, click the **Confirm Recommendation** button. Note: Letters of recommendation can only be edited or deleted only if the applicant is a current student or the applicant is an alumnus who has saved their application in the **Hold for Later Submission** mode. If you would like to make further changes, click the **Edit Recommendation** button." The screen

displays the Typed-In Letter and a list of selected judges. Note: The merge fields you have chosen will be replaced with the appropriate data when the letter is completed.

Figure 10. Confirm Recommendation Letter



- 7. To edit the letter, click on the **Edit Recommendation** button. The letter in the online editor box appears. Make the necessary changes and click **Submit**. You will be taken back to the confirmation screen. If you are satisfied, click the **Confirm Recommendation** button. Note: Letters of recommendation can only be edited or deleted only if the applicant is a current student or the applicant is an alumnus who has saved their application in the **Hold for Later Submission** mode.
- 8. To view the appearance of the letter, click on the icon next to the judge's name in the **Attach to Applications** list. A PDF version of the letter will open in a separate window.

4.4 Completed Recommendations

The Completed Recommendations tab allows recommenders to perform the following functions:

- Preview completed recommendation requests
- Search through applicants requesting recommendations
- Delete and edit recommendation letters (Note: This function can only be performed if the applicant is a current student or if the applicant is an alumnus who hasn't submitted their application and has placed the application on Hold for Later Submission).
- 1. Click on the **Completed Recommendations** tab.
- Click on the PDF document in the **Preview** column next to an applicant's name. The PDF file should open in another window displaying the actual recommendation letter.
- 3. For recommenders with multiple applicants, click in the **Applicant Search** field and type the name of the applicant you'd like to search for.
- 4. To delete a recommendation, click on the icon with the red x to the left of the applicant's name. A message asking "Are you sure you wan to delete this recommendation?" will appear. Click **OK** to proceed.
- To edit a recommendation, click on the icon with the pencil to the left of the applicant's name, make your changes, and click on the **Submit** button.
 Note: This function can only be performed if the OSCAR online editor was used to create the recommendation letter.

Figure 11. Completed Recommendations

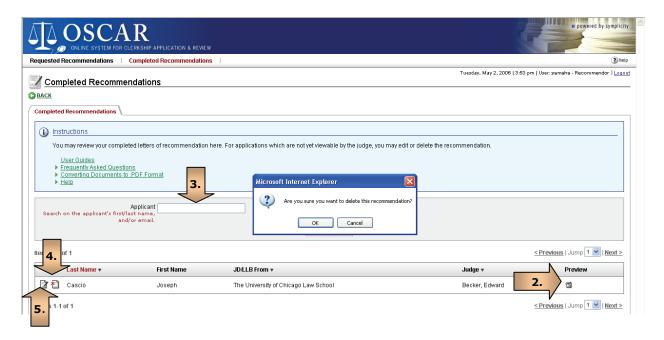
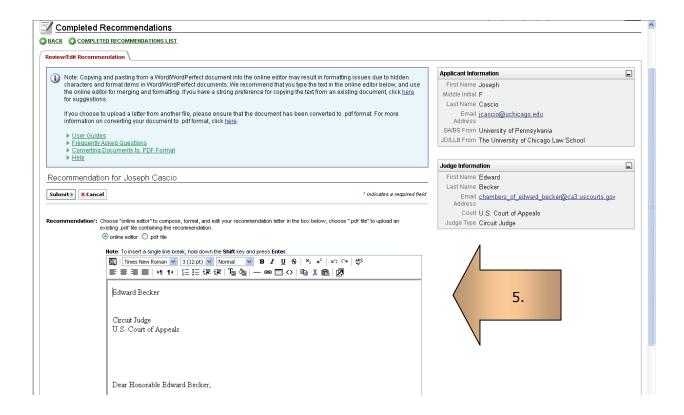


Figure 12. Edit Recommendation



5.0 Accessing OSCAR as the CC

OSCAR was designed for applicants to designate their recommenders and carbon copy (cc:) their recommendation requests to a designated law school staff person. The cc: feature is setup to allow the recommender's assistant or other designated law school staff person to have access to the recommender's account in order to upload recommendation letters. Note: An applicant may only designate one cc: law school staff person per recommender.

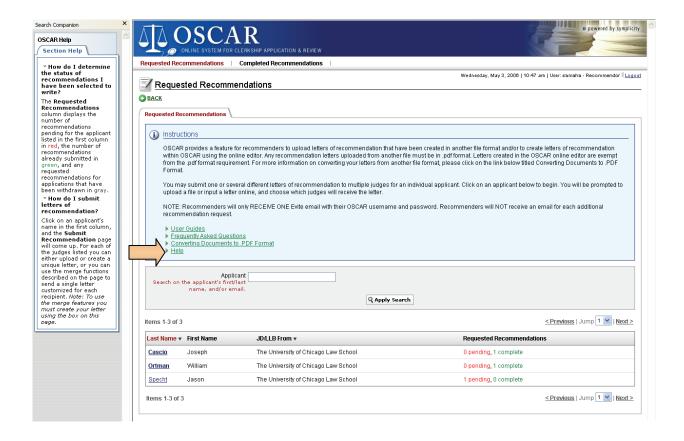
Recommenders will receive <u>one Evite email</u> from OSCAR that notifies them that an applicant has requested a recommendation letter. The Evite email is only generated on the <u>first request</u> for recommendation for that recommender. Recommenders <u>will not receive</u> an Evite email for each adidtional recommendation request, even for new applicants. The Evite email will welcome the recommender to OSCAR, provide the website link, and issue the username and password. OSCAR will periodically send reminder emails to only recommenders (and cc's) who have pending recommendations. The designated cc: law school staff person will receive a copy of the Evite email that is sent to the recommender providing the recommender's username and password. The cc: capability will allow the user to access the recommender's account and upload recommendation letters on behalf of the recommender. The cc: law school staff person will use this user guide in the same manner as the recommender.

6.0 Help Feature

OSCAR provides a Help feature for users to access when they have any system questions. The Help feature is located towards the top right of the screen.

- 1. Click on the **Help** link from the Requested Recommendations or the Completed Recommendation tab.
- 2. A list of help questions will appear on the left-side of the screen.
- Click on the applicable question.

Figure 13. Help Screen



7.0 Logging Out

To log out of the system, click on **Logout** located at the top of the screen. Users can log out of the system from any OSCAR screen.

Figure 14. Logging out

